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24 June 1953

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### THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER IN EGYPT

On 18 June the Revolutionary Command Council proclaimed Egypt a republic and announced that General Nagib had assumed the presidency. On the surface, this merely formalizes the situation, but actually there is an ominous aspect in the new developments, namely the strengthening of Colonel Nasr and his immediate supporters.

The creation of the republic, which had long been foreshadowed, was apparently precipitated by a conflict which developed within the council between Nagib and Nasr. [REDACTED] 25X1C

25X1C [REDACTED] that after ten days of internal struggle, the Nasr faction emerged victorious. Nagib was elevated to the office of president, while Nasr and his followers assumed effective control of the government.

In recent months, Nasr, who is considered the real power behind the army group and the leader of the less moderate faction within the council, has come increasingly to the front as the

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spokesman for the military regime. Thirty-five year-old Nasr is characterized as strongly nationalistic and dynamic. He has now become vice premier and minister of interior -- with control of the police. Two of his supporters, Major Salah Salam and Wing Commander Baghdadi, both in their early thirties, have been assigned the portfolios of the key ministries of national guidance (propaganda) and war and marine, respectively. Another close associate, 33-year-old Major Hakim Amir, has been appointed commander in chief of the Egyptian armed forces. The army, police and propaganda are thus brought directly under the control of the Nasr faction.

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Although Nagib was reportedly chosen just prior to the 23 July coup, last year, as a figurehead rather than leader by the group of officers organized by Colonel Nasr, he has become during the past year a very popular figure with the masses and is looked on as a symbol of the ideals declared by the army revolution. Nagib has achieved a position for himself among the people, which Nasr may find difficult to destroy.

Whether General Nagib will accept the role currently assigned to him or become the rallying point for opposition elements and then engage in a struggle for control is not yet apparent. A

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Colonel Nasr's overt assumption of control in Egypt has serious implications for the future in both the domestic and international field. The military regime's social and economic reform programs will require the fullest cooperation from such Egyptian

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experts as exist. The interference of young, inexperienced army officers in the administration of the government can be expected to increase, causing a further decline in administrative efficiency and growing friction between the military and civilians. The effectiveness of the army group will ultimately depend on its being able to retain the support of competent civilians. The prospects for this do not appear to be good.

In the realm of future Anglo-Egyptian relations, the new developments are equally ominous. Major Salam has become minister of state for Sudanese affairs in addition to holding the portfolio of ministry of national guidance. Egyptian influence in the Sudan, which reached a peak immediately following the Anglo-Egyptian agreement last February, is presently suffering a decline. Salam, who considered the February agreement a personal triumph, interested in restoring Egyptian influence there, can be expected to use every possible means to increase Egyptian activities in the Sudan without regard for political repercussions.

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Nasr and his immediate followers in the council have been reported as fundamentally opposed to a negotiated settlement with Britain on the question of British evacuation of the Suez canal base. This group accordingly desires a political victory based on British acceptance of "unconditional evacuation" and has indicated its willingness to risk the future of the regime to attain this goal. If this is true, the Suez issue becomes even more desperate.

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